



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**NH MAN SENT TO PRISON IN KIDNAPING HOAX**

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE:** United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and Kenneth W. Kaiser, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced today that Steven L. Bromley, age 37 of Derry, NH was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison for lying to the FBI during the course of an investigation into an alleged kidnaping of Bromley for religious reasons. Bromley is a self-proclaimed high priest of the Wiccan faith.

In June of 2002, the New Hampshire FBI learned that Bromley's parents, with whom Bromley had been living in South Lyndeboro, NH, had received two e-mail ransom demands. Those demands said they were from the "Church of Chutula" a rival faith, claiming that Bromley had been kidnaped and had been tortured. The e-mails went on to say that Bromley would be killed unless \$300,000 along with Bromley's "spell book" and "sword" were delivered to a motel in Kansas City, MO. The FBI initiated a nationwide search for Bromley, with efforts focused in New Hampshire, Colorado and Nebraska. One day later Bromley was found, unharmed, in Nebraska.

When Bromley was located he lied to the FBI, advising that he had been abducted in New Hampshire, and had been kept bound and handcuffed while he had been savagely beaten over the course of several days. He then described how he physically overpowered his captors and managed to escape, running for miles through underbrush before reaching a highway. A thorough investigation proved that there had been no kidnaping, and that the false report and ransom demand were part of a hoax conducted by Bromley. Bromley later admitted to the hoax, and pleaded guilty to making material false statements to federal agents under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001. The FBI Agent who found and interviewed Bromley in Nebraska testified at today's hearing before U.S. District Judge Steven McAuliffe, who determined that Bromley had lied to the FBI in order to conceal the attempted extortion.

After the sentencing today, U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono said: "The FBI could not have done a better job mobilizing its resources in response to the reported kidnaping, and determining quickly that the report was a part of an extortion plot. Kidnapings are among the most serious cases that the FBI is called in to handle. Anyone who falsely reports a kidnaping -- especially for profit -- deserves to go to prison."

The case was investigated by the FBI's Bedford, NH Resident Agency with assistance from the FBI Computer Squad in Boston, Massachusetts, and FBI and local law enforcement in Nebraska and Colorado. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorney Arnold Huftalen.